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AFRICA

Aegypten. Seine volkswirtschaftlichen Grundlagen und sein Wirtschaftsleben. Von Franz Magnus. xvi and 251 pp. J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1913. Mk. 6. 9½ x 6½.

The author has provided a very close study of the economic condition of Egypt just before it passed into the condition of a British protectorate. The former condition of Egypt had been notoriously chaotic, but recent events may be expected to bring about a better condition of affairs and to leave many of the themes here noted with no more than an historic value as memorials of a period that has passed. Dr. Magnus here examines the agricultural value of the valley at the principal points from the delta to the Sudan. He records the control of the Nile, the treatment and supply of labor and the opportunity for diversity of product. His examination of the cotton possibilities of the Nile and Sudan is particularly minute and instructive. He assumes the monopoly of the United States in the staple and is zealous to discover a way in which it may be broken for the better advantage of German industry. His assumption of this American monopoly is pardonable, but he errs in ascribing it to the creation of a commercial monopoly. It is really the natural monopoly of the superiority of staple in the fiber from our Southern States; this monopoly will automatically shift to any suitable land which can produce a better staple under conditions of commerce. Dr. Magnus shows very clearly the interdependence of the river and of the population as operative now in the valley quite as effectively as through a long series of ages past. These chapters are particularly readable and well worthy of study.

WILLIAM CHURCHILL.

From Cataract to Equator. By James T. Dennis. 217 pp. Ills. R. G. Badger, Boston, 1913. \$1.50. 7½ x 5½.

The author is an Egyptologist. He has written a good, sound book on the tourist route up the Nile from Assuan, first by boat to Wadi Halfa, second by train across the desert to Khartum, and then by steamboat to Gondokoro, in the equatorial regions and the farthest point of navigation from Egypt. Speke, Baker, Junker and other pioneer explorers described to us this same long stretch of the Nile; but they made the journey under great difficulties, one or two generations ago, long before white enterprises began to invade the upper Nile. Mr. Dennis traveled with modern facilities and in comparative comfort, though torrid heat, a plague of flies and mosquitoes and some other annoyances tended to reduce the measure of enjoyment.

This book is at present the best source of information we possess, outside of various official reports, of the conditions of travel, the state of the Nile and its shores, the attitude and circumstances of the Shilluks, Dinkas and other tribes with whom the early explorers made us familiar, the life of the river, the advancement of white enterprises, and the sudd region, and how its obstruction of navigation is overcome. The author gives excellent descriptions of Khartum, Omdurman and other points of special interest. He makes a few geographical slips, of which only one will be mentioned here. He confuses his narrative once or twice by allusions to the right or left bank of the Nile, ignoring the now fixed rule that the right bank of a river is the shore that is on our right hand as we are looking downstream.

Anthropological Report on Ibo-Speaking Peoples of Nigeria.

By N. W. Thomas. Part 4: Law and Custom of the Ibo of the Asaba District, S. Nigeria. 208 pp. Map, ills., index. Part 5: Addenda to Ibo-English Dictionary. 184 pp. Part 6: Proverbs, Stories, Tones in Ibo. 114 pp. Harrison & Sons, London, 1914. 9 x 5½.

Specimens of Languages from Southern Nigeria. By Northcote W. Thomas. 143 pp. Map. Harrison & Sons, London, 1914. 11 x 7½.

These four volumes complete this highly valuable anthropological report. The fourth volume is devoted to a study of law and custom. There are great intricacies in the life of these fetishistic communities, and the whole subject

bristles with difficult problems. Mr. Thomas is a painstaking recorder and accurate observer, and his suggested interpretations of customs are shrewd instances of insight into the African habit of thought. Palaver is the bane of the anthropologist in the African field. The savage is prone to regard speech as an amusement and seldom recognizes the value of linking it with real thought. Recognizing this difficulty, we are amazed at the success with which Mr. Thomas has compiled a well-supported treatise on the law of the bush in the primary rights of person and the tangle of rights of property. The wife and, equally, the slave seem to exist only as in possession; title to them may pass in one fashion or another, but they never cease to be property.

The last volume provides a large addition to the vocabulary already published. The Ibo of Nigeria is spoken in a sort of recitative, but with the important distinction that the play of the tones is not merely a matter of ornament but it is essentially a determinant of the signification of the word; therefore the tone must be indicated for each word when it is recorded. The value of these Ibo tones has been carefully studied from the phonogram and expressed as nearly as possible upon our musical scale, thus providing the means whereby facility may be acquired in their use.

WILLIAM CHURCHILL.

The Sultanate of Bornu. Translated from the German of Dr. A. Schultze.

With additions and appendices by P. Askell Benton. 401 pp. Map, index. Oxford University Press, New York, 1913. 7 x 5.

A book that should be in every collection of African literature, because it not only gives the quintessence of what Barth and Nachtigal wrote on Bornu but also the important facts revealed in the literature of the past twenty years. Dr. Schultze's book, of which this is a translation "with additions," is the first monograph that has been written on this very interesting and economically important part of Africa. Schultze, who was a member of the Anglo-German Yola-Chad Boundary Commission, covered in his book the essentials of the literature already known, together with his own observations, dealing generally with all lines of inquiry and correcting statements that he could prove to be erroneous. It is a model German monograph, most painstaking in the writing and ably covering the ground.

Mr. Benton, who is a British official in the Bornu Province of Nigeria, has made a faithful translation of the original and has added to it many footnotes of his own, enclosed in brackets, which enrich the original work. The book is all the more timely because, unfortunately, Nachtigal's great work has never been translated into English.

ASIA

Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking. (From the 16th to the 20th Century.) By E. Backhouse and J. O. P. Bland. 531 pp. Ills., index. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1914. \$4.50. 10 x 6½.

The authors have already shown in their great work upon the Empress Dowager a remarkably sympathetic appreciation of the Chinese habit of thought. They present a clear picture of the reforming power of the victorious general when attacking the palace corruption of the Mings. They record the virtuous days of the Manchu dynasty when in its youthful strength, and trace the inevitable progress of deterioration when the palace servants and the palace women led the emperors into ease and then into vice. They point out the sturdy morality of the Chinese people and make it clear that a dynasty must totter when its conduct transgresses the rules of this morality which has existed as a rule of conduct for millenniums in this ancient civilization. This is the central theme of this volume of the history of the last four centuries, a theme most excellently elaborated. They are cautious in their forecast of the future of China under its present non-dynastic rule. China itself is cautious and is willing to await the course of events. As regards their attitude toward President Yuan Shih-k'ai, it may be significant that they note with particular force the fact that both the Manchu dynasty, on whose ruins he sits in rule,